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## Involvement

Robb MacDonald gave a presentation Monday at the Libby Rotary luncheon about the Libby Area Development Company.

MacDonald is the chair of the group, which is responsible for wading through the applications of individuals, businesses and groups seeking a piece of the community's \$8 million, or the roughly \$4 million that remains. The group makes a recommendation for funding, which is passed along to the city council for approval.

Of late the council has been scrutinizing every application more closely and the relationship between the elected council and the appointed LADC board has been contentious at best.

The \$8 million fund was born of controversy with some people feeling left out of the process and others resenting the existence of the fund coming as it did on the heels of EPA's arrival in Libby to investigate and clean up asbestos contamination.

Over the years, some of the applications for funds, and subsequent decisions by the LADC, have also generated much gossip and criticism outside of the official meetings on those decisions. People feel strongly enough to create dissension in the ranks but not strongly enough to show up at a meeting and make the same comment.

I'm sure the LADC would like that comment up front to consider in their deliberations. Instead the criticisms are taking a more destructive path.

McDonald admitted going through a recent soul-searching as to why he continues to serve on a board that attracts wave after wave of abuse. Because somebody has to and who better was his response.

The LADC chair is like many area residents, including city council members and other members of the LADC board, who step forward and volunteer to give something back to the community.

The problem is fewer and fewer people are stepping forward but the murmur of criticism seems to remain constant.

As McDonald pointed out, a couple of LADC seats are opening and the board has received two applications. Communities don't progress and develop on rumors. They need people to be involved, to nurture that growth and the rest of the community to participate in the debate so the best possible decisions are made.

Based on the steady hum of negativity, you'd think people would be happiest when no decisions were made and things kind of stumbled on into freefall. At the same time, appointed and elected boards can't operate in a vacuum, they need input. They need people to get involved. — Roger Morris

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